

2/8/91

# RESULTS: SUPTS' QUESTIONNAIRE

How Americans View the Environment

**'The Visitor Experience'  
What Do We Really Mean?**

Americans Are Willing  
To Sacrifice to Reduce  
Pollution

TWO DECADES OF RISING ENVIRONMENTAL CONSCIOUSNESS

**Americans pummel parks  
with conflicting goals**

*The Crowded Outdoors*  
**Anxious Armies  
Of Vacationers  
Are Demanding  
More From Nature**

We all need to  
become 'ecotour-  
ists,' leaving a place  
as pristine as it was  
when we encour-  
tered it.

**Tons of trampling tourists**



# United States Department of the Interior



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

P.O. BOX 37127

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20013-7127

IN REPLY REFER TO:

February 8, 1991

Memorandum

To: Park Superintendents

From: Assistant to the Director for Science and Technology

Subject: FOLLOW-UP RESULTS OF SUPERINTENDENTS' RESPONSES TO  
QUESTIONNAIRE ABOUT NATURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

In my Superintendents' Memorandum #27, I indicated how the public responded to an attitudinal survey conducted at five parks over a 10-year period. This survey involved a set of 12 standard questions concerning attitudes toward nature and ecological processes, and toward man's role in using, modifying, managing and manipulating earth's resources and the environment. I thought it might be interesting to ask park Superintendents to respond to the same set of 12 questions. The return rate was excellent.....about 85 per cent. The results are tabulated in the Attachment.

..Your responses to questions 1-4 indicate very strong concerns about the fate of nature and the environment. A similar public response was exhibited in the five visitor surveys. Note the near unanimous concensus as regards questions #3 (Humans must live in harmony with nature in order to survive) and #4 (Mankind is severely abusing the environment).

..Your responses to questions 5-8 indicate a strong belief that man should respect nature, and not subjugate or manipulate nature to suit his immediate needs. Your responses as relate to this matter were considerably more uniform and consistent than those expressed in the five visitor surveys. The question where there was by far the most divergence of opinion amongst Superintendents was the same question for which the public respondents expressed the widest variability in their answers (#5: Humans have the right to modify the natural environment to suit their needs). This suggests that perhaps the question has been interpreted in different ways by different people.

..Your responses to questions 9-12 were generally consistent with those expressed in the five visitor surveys . . . . a belief that there will need to be limits on economic development when that development occurs at the

expense of resources and the environment. Note the near unanimous agreement (95%) as relates to item 11 (The earth is like a spaceship with only limited room and resources), suggesting a strong consensus that we are dealing with a finite system, and that proper balance must be maintained between man and his surroundings in the quest to achieve a better overall ecological/economic quality of life.

Thanks to all who responded to the questionnaire. As anticipated, the results show your deep and personal respect for nature and the environment and strong feelings about the extent to which man should attempt to manipulate natural processes.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dick Bruceland". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, prominent "D" and "B".

Richard H. Bruceland

Attachment

CONCERNS ABOUT ENVIRONMENT/NATURE

<u>Scale item statements</u>	<u>Agree or Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Disagree or Strongly Disagree</u>
1. The balance of nature is very delicate and easily upset.	87%	7%	6%
2. When humans interfere with nature, it often produces disastrous results.	84%	11%	5%
3. Humans must live in harmony with nature in order to survive.	93%	4%	3%
4. Mankind is severely abusing the environment.	96%	4%	0%
5. Humans have the right to modify the natural environment to suit their needs.	26%	10%	56%
6. Mankind was created to rule over the rest of nature.	9%	9%	82%
7. Plants and animals exist primarily to be used by humans.	4%	10%	86%
8. Humans need not adapt to the natural environment because they can remake it to suit their needs.	6%	4%	90%
9. We are approaching the limit of the number of people the earth can support.	64%	20%	16%
10. To maintain a healthy economy, we will have to develop a steady state economy where industrial growth is controlled.	72%	18%	10%
11. The earth is like a spaceship with only limited room and resources.	95%	3%	2%
12. There are limits to growth beyond which our industrial society cannot expand.	82%	11%	7%